CLAIMS:

1. A surgical table transfer system comprising a patient support in the form of a table top; a surgical table base in the form of a pedestal; a transporter; and a connection device for selectively connecting the table top to the pedestal or the transporter, the connection device comprising a first transfer block mounted on the pedestal; a second transfer block mounted on the transporter; and a latch mechanism mounted on the table top and adapted selectively to latch with one of the first and second transfer blocks, the latch mechanism comprising a body having first and second opposite mating surfaces, each of which is adapted to mate with a corresponding mating surface of a respective first or second transfer block, and a displaceable catch member mounted on the body which is adapted to be displaceable between first and second latching positions for respective latching engagement with the first and second transfer blocks, the catch member having first and second catch elements on a respective opposite side thereof, each transfer block including a cavity for latching engagement therein of the respective catch element.

2. A surgical table transfer system according to claim 1 wherein the catch member has a substantially T-shaped cross-section and comprises a pair of opposite outwardly directed arms and a leg, the catch member being pivotally mounted to the body about an axis orthogonal to the arms and the leg.

3. A surgical table transfer system according to claim 2 wherein the catch member is freely pivotally mounted to the body and is unbiased in any particular direction.

4. A surgical table transfer system according to claim 2 or claim 3 wherein the catch elements are disposed at a foot at an end of the leg.

5. A surgical table transfer system according to any one of claims 2 to 4 wherein the arms of the catch member each define a respective bearing surface, each bearing surface being adapted to be engaged by a respective transfer block, thereby to be urged upwardly to pivot the catch member about the axis thereby to latch one of the catch elements in the cavity of that respective transfer block.

6. A surgical table transfer system according to claim 5 wherein each transfer block is provided with at least one biasing element which is adapted to be urged against the respective bearing surface to cause pivoting of the catch member when the respective transfer block supports the latch mechanism.

7. A surgical table transfer system according to claim 6 wherein the biasing element comprises one or more sprung components disposed in a bore of the transfer block, an end of the sprung components extending, in an unbiased configuration, above a surface of the transfer block for engagement with the catch member.

8. A surgical table transfer system according to any foregoing claim wherein the body defines a trapezoidally shaped recess in which the catch member is mounted, and each transfer block is provided with a correspondingly trapezoidally shaped support member for mating engagement with the recess.

9. A surgical table transfer system according to claim 8 wherein the trapezoidal shape of the recess and the trapezoidal shape of the support members point upwardly.

10. A surgical table transfer system according to any foregoing claim wherein the body of the latch mechanism includes two downwardly depending longitudinally spaced catch support members between which the catch member is mounted, each catch support member having a pair of opposite lateral faces which are downwardly and inwardly inclined, and each transfer block has a pair of longitudinally spaced lateral faces which are downwardly and outwardly inclined, the lateral faces of both the catch support members and the transfer blocks being adapted to permit relative sliding motion therebetween for assisting lateral location of the transfer blocks relative to the latch mechanism during relative vertical movement therebetween.

11. A surgical table transfer system according to claim 10 wherein the inclined lateral faces of the catch support members each comprise an upper portion and a lower portion, the lower inclined portion being inclined at a greater angle to the vertical than the upper portion, and each inclined lateral face of the transfer block comprises an upper portion and

a lower portion, the upper portion being inclined at a greater angle to the vertical than the lower portion.